

Thankfully the porno moustache has been overlooked in the seventies revival. Not so the bell-bottoms, disco music and dragsters. But it was the trashy TV of the time that has come back in force with remakes ranging from *The Brady Bunch* to *Charlie's Angels*. Little wonder, as those original series offered a collective experience for viewers all the way from Kuala Lumpur to Silverton.

Street smart dicks *Starsky and Hutch* are the latest to receive a big screen adaptation, taking us spiralling back in a wave of nostalgia not unlike Jimmy Stewart in that dream sequence from *Vertigo*.

and funky soundtrack.

"I think Owen and I brought whatever it is we are as people to the characters, but it's through Todd's eyes" observes Stiller.

For Stiller, the perennial whipping boy and girl chaser in comedies like *There's Something About Mary* and *Meet the Parents*, it's a chance to play against type with open shirt and cool poise. And being his favourite show as a kid, it's all done with surprising reverence.

"I don't think we ever looked at it as a parody. I think our characters take it pretty seriously in the movie. I don't think we're ever doing jokes that are commenting on the genre. I watched a

Stiller and Owen Wilson seemed to have formed their own unique Hollywood clique. The upcoming *Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story*, *The Wendell Baker Story* and *The Wedding Crashers* all feature overlapping performances from the quartet, for which Wilson offers a simple explanation. "It's just sort of people that you get along with and have the same sort of sense of humour with." It's a philosophy that no doubt extends to his longtime writing collaborator Wes Anderson, with *Bottle Rocket* (1996), *Rushmore* (1998) and *The Royal Tenenbaums* (2001) being the acclaimed results of that partnership.

Though Anderson has recently ditched Wilson as creative partner for *The Life Aquatic* (a biopic on Jacques Cousteau), Wilson still retains a starring role alongside Bill Murray. It's an undersea saga that seems to be tangled in complication, though it might just be Wilson's laid back rundown complicating things.

"Like, every movie there's always kind of a big crisis; 'Oh, you need to go over to Italy and you gotta go and do all this diving. You're going to have to go get certified, but you can't be certified in America, it won't work there...' And then you go over there and you hardly do any diving".

Similar to Wes Anderson, Stiller has shared a rewarding partnership with Wilson dating all



LIVING IN THE SEVENTIES

In *Starsky & Hutch*, inseparable comedy duo Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson take their friendship to a whole new level of intimacy, or was that just men being men in the days of disco?

"I think it was a freer time. There was so much less media, so much less saturation of satellite television, electronic games – you know, it was Pong, it was very low tech," says Ben Stiller, with obvious affection for a time when the web was what Spidey swung around on. "I grew up in the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the '70s and there were block parties and it was multi-cultural and it was the aftermath of Vietnam and people were sort of into Earth Day and saving the planet. It was very genuine and real and sort of connected to something, I think."

Stiller inherits the Paul Michael Glaser role of the uptight David Starsky, opposite *Zoolander* pal Owen Wilson (playing super-smooth Ken Hutchinson) for whom *Starsky & Hutch* has a personal significance. "Yeah, that was the first cop show that I was into," Wilson reveals. "It was that and then *Magnum P.I.*, then *Miami Vice*, but *Starsky & Hutch* sort of began it".

Taking on the task of scripting *Starsky & Hutch* is Todd Phillips, the freshman writer-director of *Road Trip* and *Old School*. Conceived as a prequel to the TV series itself, the film depicts the formation of an unstoppable crime fighting partnership amidst a bevy of beauties, fast cars

lot of the episodes just to get inspired, to get a vibe for what they were doing and I think there's a lack of irony or cynicism; characters just take themselves and what they do very seriously, not worrying about political correctness as much as we do now."

Not everything that comes across as cheesy is intentional, explains Stiller. "It's impossible for it not to get turned into something it wasn't because the reality is that you're taking all these elements like the television, the clothes and the music and they may get idealised in our minds on some level no matter what it is, so it can never be what it was".

So the homoerotic allusions are merely male bonding, seventies style? "A lot of that stuff that you might think is kind of like a parody they actually did in the show," Stiller insists. "They did wear shoulder holsters in the locker room and they did console each other. There's an episode where Hutch's girlfriend gets murdered [Owen: "Oh yeah!"] and Starsky hugs him and he breaks down... it's all stuff we took from the show."

Along with Vince Vaughn, who co-stars as the villain of *Starsky & Hutch*, Will Ferrell, Ben

the way back to *The Cable Guy*. "We just enjoy each other's company and have fun working together and I think as long as people allow us to work together, it'll just keep on going, I think" says Stiller.

Even if it wasn't a \$60 million cops and robbers production, Wilson would like to think that "we'd be in the Marina doing community theatre. It would probably be maybe a one-man show, and Ben would play a supporting role."

TV RESURRECTION

More upcoming from the decade that keeps on giving

•Six Million Dollar Man

Faster, better and stronger? Not hard considering Jim Carrey's subbing for Lee Majors. Todd Phillips helms fresh from *Starsky & Hutch*. Bionic? How about moronic?

•Logan's Run

Bryan (X-Men) Singer is busy on the script. Presumably it's based on the 1976 feature movie starring Michael York, not the shortlived 1977 spin-off series, but you can never be sure. Due 2005.

•Dukes of Hazzard

Ashton Kutcher and Paul Walker may have expressed interest in playing the fast driving country cousins, but the big news is reality TV bimbo Jessica Simpson. She's beat out Britney Spears to fill the coveted hot pants vacated by Catherine Bach. Due 2005.



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